

MEMORANDUM

November 19, 2002

TO: Governor

FROM: John

RE: Telephone interview with Robert Pear, New York Times

I spoke again today with Robert Pear of The New York Times. He would like to interview for a story he's doing on Democratic governors and how they'll work, from a policy standpoint, with a Republican Congress and Republican administration. He has asked for 5-10 minutes to do the interview.

Ramona Oliver with the DGA encouraged the message that with more Democratic governors, they are poised to become a dominant voice in domestic policy, especially in light of the Republican focus on homeland security and war with Iraq.

Phillip and I discussed this today, and believe your message should be more general. States and governors have more impact on policy than ever before, and it is vitally important for the governors to be involved in the policy-making process. This also is an opportunity for you to speak to your involvement with LIHEAP, IDEA and the fact that you, as a Democratic governor, brought Mississippi to a point where we have higher accountability standards than those called for by the feds and our role with No Child Left Behind (Following the Leaders).

The main concern is how to couch the working relationship with Lott, now that he's back as majority leader. You should speak to your confidence in working across the board to make good policy for Mississippi, with the end goal of doing more to meet the needs of the people with regards to education, jobs and health care. It's important to work with the congressional delegation to ensure no more unfunded mandates are forced on the state.

Robert will be available in the morning, if you could call him after your 9:30 appointment. His number is 202-862-0344.